

## House Analogies - Taking Meals Together

Consider how fundamental food is sustaining life. Then see how much of each day is spent taking food or fluids and how enjoyable this can be. Few of us dislike mealtimes and the refreshment to our bodies often results in greater contentment and good humour. Most of us like to eat in the company of others.

Given that taking meals is so natural to life, taking a meal together at church in the company of fellow Christians becomes fundamental. The old church hall with its attached kitchen has been the mainstay of a gathering place in churches for a century and a half. But how many of these kitchens would meet current standards for new commercial kitchens? Can they be cleaned to the current standards of a commercial kitchen where there are washable surfaces to all walls and floors with no concealed spaces behind fitted units? Do you know of restaurants any that have remained unchanged for even 20 years?

And what about the barbecue? Jesus held a barbecue on the beach and it's recorded in John 21. There was a warm invitation offered and the disciples responded with surprise and delight. The conversation and challenge to Peter that resulted was so significant to the future of the church.

So where is your church's barbecue area? Is it conducive to good conversations? Can it engage the passing community in the life of the church? Seeing the positive life within the church can be attractive to people of the local community, particularly the lonely or distressed.

Does the place where your church takes meals together meet a standard that members and your guests would recognise as comfortable today?

Of course, many church communities have meals together as part of their weekly gathering before or after meeting for worship. This is a tradition of many ethnic language church communities in Australia and is a very important part of their gathering and bonding together.

Constructing and maintaining a good quality kitchen is a costly part of your building. As we've already highlighted in earlier blogs, it is important to have refreshments provided in the foyer space as part of natural hospitality. This kitchen location needs to serve both foyer hospitality and a space for main meals. It should either be located between the two or your foyer should be in the dining space. Careful planning is needed to achieve this in any new building or refurbishment. Larger operations will have more kitchen facilities.



*The main dining area is a cafe on the edge of the foyer at Crossway Baptist, East Burwood, Vic*

Part of living sustainably is to share facilities with other organisations when the church does not need them. Our property should not be empty six days a week. Many environmental health authorities require a higher standard of kitchen if food is to be sold, or the kitchen used by non-member organisations. Reaching this standard might be seen as a cost initially, but this can be mission positive and financially beneficial from rentals achieved.

Next time: House Analogies – The Study and the Shed

*“Making Property Serve Mission - Rethinking the Church's buildings for the 21st Century” by Fred Batterton is widely available online and in Christian bookstores. Available in paperback and ebook. [Further information link.](#)*

